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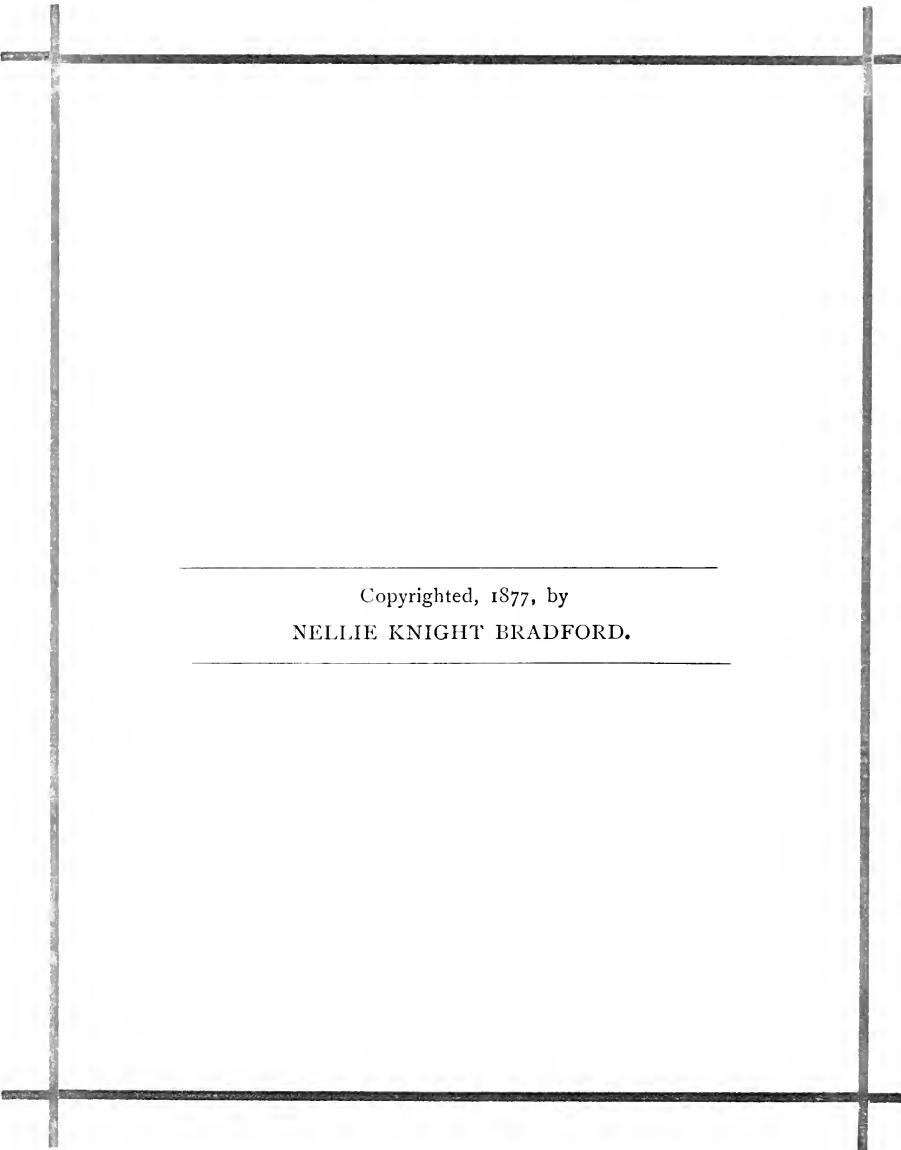
**HOMES
OF
REAL
GARDENING.**



SONGS
OF
REAL CHILDREN.

BY NELLIE KNIGHT BRADFORD.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS. :
CLARK W. BRYAN AND COMPANY, PRINTERS.
1877.



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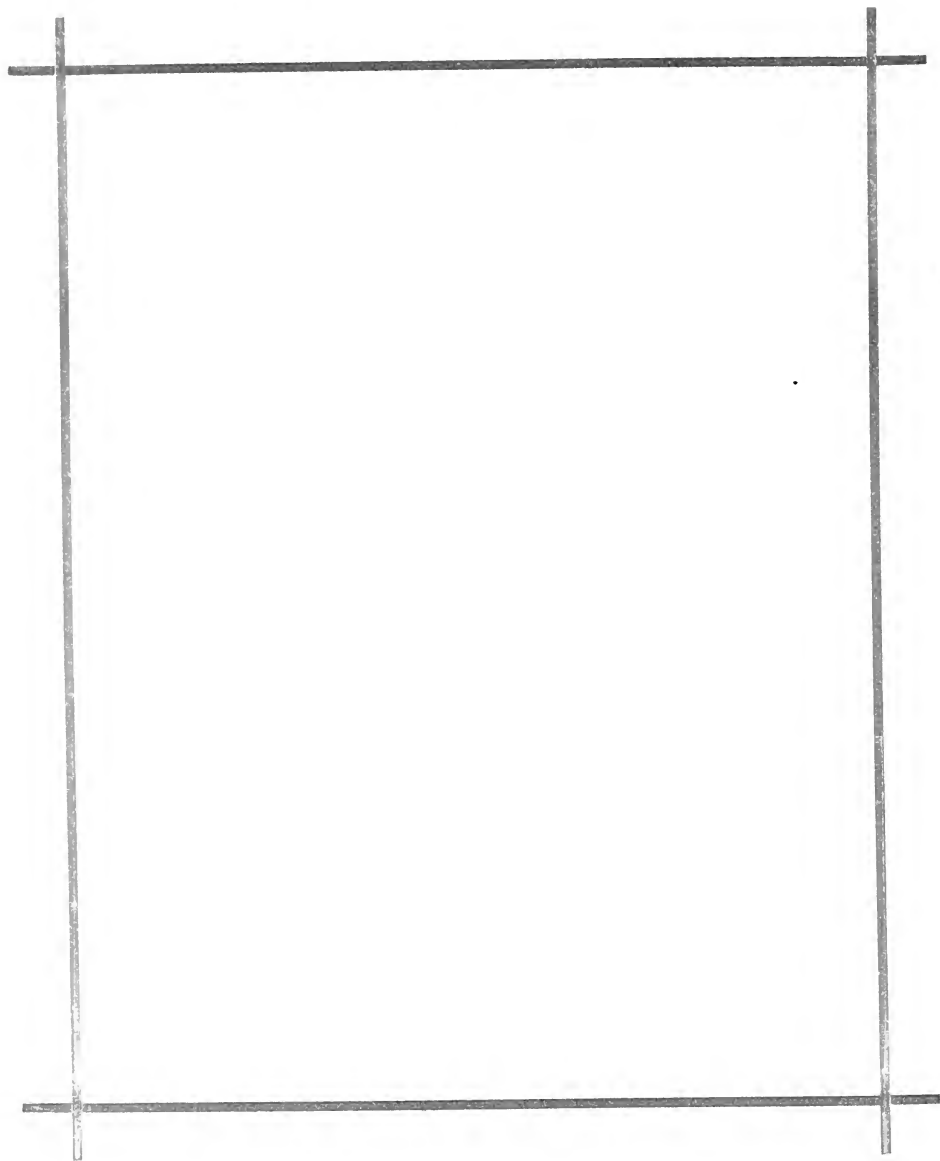
DEDICATED

TO

THE REAL CHILDREN, WHOSE DAILY LIVES HAVE MADE
THE MUSIC TO WHICH THESE SONGS ARE
ONLY THE WORDS,

BY

THEIR MOTHER.



THE ANGEL'S VISIT.



N Angel came down from heaven,
Last night as I went to sleep,
I had said my "now I lay me,"
Praying God "my soul to keep."

I had folded my hands on my bosom,
Asked forgiveness for all my sins,
So that "if I should die before I should wake,"
The angels would let me in.

The stars twinkled high in the heavens.

The moonlight lay on my floor,
When I heard a sound like fluttering wings,
Near Grandpapa's open door.

I know now it was the angel :

And I'm glad that I heard him come,
For they told me in the morning,
That he'd taken dear Grandpa home.

And I knew that my darling Grandpa,
Had long been waiting to go.
As I sat on his knee in the twilight soft,
He had often told me so.

But because God thought we'd be lonely,
In the house with dear Grandpa gone,
He sent by the angel, a *baby*,
To keep for our very own!

So we call him little Stephen ;
For that was dear Grandpa's name ;
And his birthday on earth, and Grandpa's in heaven,
Will always be the same !



THE LITTLE CRIB.



LITTLE crib in the corner stands,
All made of walnut by careful hands,
It has rocked our darlings for nine bright years,
It has cradled our hopes, and joys, and fears,
That little crib of walnut.

First, Mary the fair, with her gold-bright hair,
Found a nest and a home all waiting there.
Oh ! wondrous child that first-born girl,
With her eyes of blue, and her brow of pearl,
As she lay in that crib of walnut.

Next Harry came, with his dimpled face,
In our loving hearts to ask a place.
With his soft brown eyes and his chestnut curls,
To take the place of the fairy girl
In the little crib of walnut.

Then Ruth, the little Puritan maid,
In the tiny crib was tenderly laid.
The daintiest birdling that yet had come
With fluttering wing, to nestle down
In the little crib of walnut.

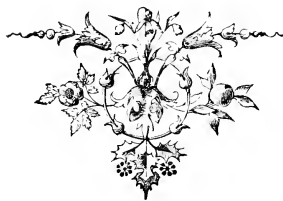
But my head bows down on the pillow white,
As I think of the little girl to night,
Who, in one short year, her mission all done,
Had spread her wings, and to Heaven had flown,
From that little crib of walnut.

And we could not look at our empty crib then,
So we sent it away to one near of kin,
Where Alice and Buddie, with sweet delight,
Made a playhouse by day, and a nest at night,
Of the little crib of walnut.

But in opening Spring of centennial year,
Another was given our hearts to cheer.
So we sent for the crib which Bud had outgrown,
And welcomed back as part of our home,
The little crib of walnut.

So, there behind the nursery door,
Sleeps darling baby—number four.
He should be George W., Ulysses, or Hayes.
But we only call him dear little Ray.
As he sleeps in the crib of walnut.

But despite the wear of the nine years long,
The little barque is still staunch and strong.
It may cradle another half dozen of babes,
Ere it finds its way to the attic shades,
That little crib of walnut.



MABEL'S WISH.



LITTLE Mabel was dressing her dollies one day,
When dear Mama called her away from her play,
To try on a new dress she was making with care,
For *her* little dollie with true, real hair,
And a little pug nose, and two laughing blue eyes,
That twinkled and trembled like stars in the skies.

'Twas a gay little dress, with collar of blue,
With lappets, and pockets, and tiny cuffs, too.
You surely would think she would run and obey
Dear Mama, who had worked on her dress all the day ;

But she lingered, and pouted, and fretted instead,
And said, with a toss of her bright golden head,

“I am tired of dresses—I wish we could do
As the Bible folks did, they were good people too.
In my Sunday-school lesson, it tells about John ;
Where he lived, what he did, and what he had on.
He never was troubled with clothing at all,
But just wrapped himself up in a *camel's hair* shawl.”

“Very well,” said Mama, “Mabel dear, you may try
A life like good John's, but be sure by and by,
When you want your good supper of milk and sweet bread,
You must go to the woods, and eat *locusts* instead.
You may find too, some *honey* by searching about,
For wild bees and locusts are plenty, no doubt.”

“ You may take my new shawl, but leave all your clothes,
For a poor little girl, whom Mama well knows.
And when the night comes, you must lay down your head
With a stone for your pillow, and leaves for your bed.
And when through the forest the darkness shall creep,
No Mother can watch you or rock you to sleep.”

Then quickly round Mother’s neck white arms were pressed.
And a head on her bosom was nestled at rest.
“ Dear Mama, forgive me, my dress I will try,
For I never could leave you—I surely should die !
And I’m sure that the neighbors would think it was funny
If I lived in the woods, and ate locusts and honey ! ”



FLORA.



DEAR little Flora she came with the Summer,

When flowers were sweetest, and birds were
in tune;

She was fairer than Summer, and dearer than bird-song,

And sweeter than rose-buds that open in June.

Her eyes, like wet violets, dewy and tender,

Bloomed under her brow. like flowers in snow ;

Her mouth, like an imprint of kisses so gentle,

Left there by the angels when letting her go.

Her hands and her feet, were like tiny sea-shells,
 Caressed by the waves into perfectest mould ;
Her hair, like a glimmer of shimmering sunshine,
 Lay soft on her head, like the purest of gold.

But earth-fare was too coarse, and too rude softest zephyrs,
 For a spirit like hers ; so she lived on my love,
Through the long dreary Winter—then an angel bent over
 And said—“ This fair blossom is needed above.”

I turned my face heavenward, and said to the angel,
 While tear-drops were blinding, and sobs choked me sore,

“ Oh angel, why *needed!* you’ve many in heaven,
You cannot be wanting my one blossom more ? ”

But he answered me softly, “ Of such is the kingdom ; ”
Oh, beautiful kingdom, my heart murmured low,
Will aught *I* can give make its beauty more perfect ?
If so, give me grace, Lord, I will let it go.

His wings rustled gently, and all through my chamber
His presence was felt, though I saw not his face ;
He took from my bosom my dearly loved treasure,
And bore it away to that heavenly place.

So I've helped to make heaven, and God will remember

The treasure I gave—He'll remember it well,

And He'll open the gate for me, sometime, to enter,

And will say, *Flora's Mother* has come here to dwell.



THE LITTLE ULSTER.



PAPA and Harry are going away,
To Grandpa's house on this winter day.
The breakfast is ready, the coffee is hot,
And Harry's face shines in the silver pot,
As he thinks of his nice, new Ulster !

The day is cold, the wind is bleak,
And as Mama pats his dimpled cheek,
She fears the storm and the winter cold,
For her lamb about to leave the fold,
In spite of the little Ulster !

'Tis time for the train—the horses are up,
And Mama hastily drops her cup,
While Aunties, and Cousins, and Sister small,
Join in the shout that goes up from the hall,
At the little man in his Ulster !

Now, out of the door, in the new fallen snow,
Papa and Harry gleefully go.
No storm-cloud can darken, no parting make sad,
The little heart that is beating so glad,
All buttoned up in that Ulster !

Mama drops a tear as she says “good-bye,”
And up in her heart springs a little sigh,
As she looks at her six-years old boy, and fears,
That the past has taken his *baby* years—
And left a *boy* in an Ulster !

And she feels herself suddenly growing old,
As her baby boy goes out from her fold,
Not clad in dresses and pinafores neat,
Which her hands have fashioned and made complete,
But dressed in a tailor-made Ulster !

And she may not stay the coming years,
Though they bring her clouds, and rain, and tears.
She *has* six glad years of brightest joy,
In memory of her precious boy,

Before he wore an Ulster !



CRADLE SONG.



NIGHT o'er the drowsy world,

Night's veil is spread.

Flowers are dew-impearled,

Stars overhead.

All living things at rest,

Sunshine all gone,

On thy fond Mother's breast,

Sleep, little one.

Safe in their downy nests,

Baby birds sleep,

Till o'er the mountain crest,
Daylight shall creep.
High in the heavens bright,
Sails the white moon.
Sleep thou till morning light,
Sleep, precious one.

Out on the ocean deep,
Sails a brave ship.
God and his angels keep
Guard over it.
Hearts must not break to-night,
Mother will keep
Watch, till the rosy light,
Sleep, baby, sleep.

Hush! do not waken love,
Tenderly near,
Angels are hovering
Over thee, dear.
In thy sweet dreams, baby,
Pray them to keep
Him on the billow—then
Sleep, dearest, sleep.



ONE YEAR AGO TO-NIGHT.



HAD three little stockings all hung in a row,
In the chimney corner bright.
They were filled to bursting from top to toe,
As they caught the firelight's ruddy glow,
One year ago to-night !

For Santa Claus gay, with horses and sleigh,
Was coming before the daylight.
Right down through the room where the children lay,
All rosy with health, and tired with play,
One year ago to-night !

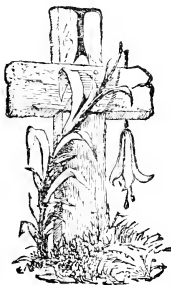
Three little heads pressed the pillows warm,
 With their golden glory bright.
Dear little nestlings, safe from harm,
What recked they of cold or of storm,
 One year ago to-night !

Three pairs of wee hands, all dimpled and fair,
 Lay over the spread so white,
And on each pure brow, unfurrowed by care,
I laid a kiss, while I breathed a prayer,
 One year ago to-night !

It was easy to say, as my darlings lay
 All near me in slumbers light,
“Thy will be done”—while I *held* my own,
And I murmured the words in thoughtless tone,
 One year ago to-night !

Ah me ! on this Christmas morning fair,
There were no little stockings in sight.
They are folded away, brown, blue, and red,
And the pillows are smooth on each little bed,
This weary Christmas night !

His will is done, but my heart makes moan,
For the children out of sight,
As with empty hands I sit alone,
And remember the work that I hoped to have done,
For this very Christmas night !



BEDTIME.



IS the children's hour, and the starry night,

Folds low its wing o'er the care-crowned day.

The little vexations that came with the light,

With the light have faded and vanished away.

The Mother sits with her little brood,

In bed gowns of white, and of brightest red.

Two pairs of black eyes—one pair of blue,

Two little firemen, and one little maid.

Papa comes in, and a frolic we shall see,

With the two little firemen in trowsers red.

While the white-robed maiden climbs to his knee,

Then the kisses are given, and the good nights said.

Now at Mother's knee bends each dear head,

While the evening prayers are whispered low.

Child like and simple, the words that are said,

But the Savior is listening to them, I know.

Up on the wall hangs a picture fair,

One little girl is an angel to-night ;

With her deep, dark eyes, and her shining hair,

She seems with them there in the nursery bright.

But the Mother knows that an angel's breast,
Pillows her baby's head to-night ;
And she would not disturb its sacred rest,
Though she sat there *alone* in the firelight.



JOHNNIE'S FLOWERS.



LITTLE Johnnie came in with the morning dew,
All shining and sparkling on each little shoe,
With his hands full of flowers, mouth up for a kiss,
Was ever a mother so happy as his !

“These flowers are for you, Mama dear,” said her boy,
His little brown face all dimpled with joy,
“They came from my garden—Sweet Williams and Pinks ;
And this dear little Pansy, just see how it *winks* ! ”

But Johnny's warm hand made poor Pansy so faint,
That she drooped her sweet head, but made no complaint.
So, Mama brought some water, in vases of blue,
And as Pansy was drinking, *Mama* thought she winked too!

And she thanked her dear boy for his gift of sweet flowers,
And all through the day in her busiest hours,
They made her room cheerful, and so did her good,
And she did not forget them, go where she would.

And at last, when the burden and heat of the day
Was over, and children were tired with play,
Mama thought as she looked at the flowers that night,
That she saw her boy's *face* in the Pansy so bright!

But she went to his crib, and Johnnie was there.
And never was Pansy or Posy so fair !
And she prayed the dear Lord in the silent night hours,
That her boy might be kept, as pure as his flowers.



EDDIE AND MAY.



LL through the lovely summer weather,
Two little children walked together
To school, 'mid the blossoms and fragrant clover,
Their sunny hearts with joy running over,
Little Eddie, and happy May.

An arm of each round the others waist,
Was thrown with innocent childish grace.
In sunshine or shadow, in bright days or sad,
The children's faces were merry and glad,
Little Eddie, and happy May.

And when the birds and the blossoms were gone,
And the woods were scarlet, and golden, and brown,
The death-angel asked for many a gem
To set in the Master's diadem,
And among them was little May.

But while her spirit was passing, she cried,
"Oh, where is Eddie? Is he by my side?
The way to heaven would brighter be,
If he might only go with me.
Where's Eddie?" said little May.

But she went the way that we all must go
Alone, and though leaning on God, we know
We shall yearn for a human hand to hold,
When heart is failing, and flesh grows cold,
Like the little child, darling May!

Eddie still waits—but the coming years
May furrow his face, and fade it with tears.
But if bringing wealth and choicest treasure,
They can ne'er bestow any richer measure
Of love, than little May's !

Faithful to death ! Oh, little one,
Whether Eddie follow thee late, or soon,
Watch for his coming from that fair shore,
And hand in hand together once more
Shall walk, Eddie, and happy May !



THE GOVERNOR'S VISIT

TO THE CHARITY SCHOOL.



THEY were only charity children—those waifs,

And he, the Chief of the State ;

But with eager faces and hungry souls,

For a loving word they wait.

They gather with slow and reverent mien,

While the bright September sun,

Through the chapel windows slanting low,

Tells the day is nearly done.

He comes before them with royal air,
But his face is tender indeed :
Like a benediction his words fall down
On each little waiting head !

He tells them, the beautiful polished shaft
Of marble that shines in the sun,
Was once a shapeless mass of stone,
Ere the artist's work was begun !

That the loving sculptor, day by day,
Had given the stone his *thought* ;
And with hammer and chisel and patient work.
The masterpiece had wrought !

And that deep within the roughest stone,
Lies an image of beauty rare ;
Only waiting that artist's chisel-strokes
To the world shall *prove* it there !

And that, thus beneath the rudest garb,
May an image of beauty shine ;
Only needing the strokes from the Master's hand,
To render it divine !

He ceased, and the children felt that a friend
Had reached a helping hand ;
Their wants such a heart as his, they knew,
Could lovingly understand.

And in that day when the Master's care,
Shall gather his jewels fine,
On their Governor's head may *children's names*
In starry beauty shine !



